

And So It Goes



How does the tortured matter stand? Every day another objection is developed, or at any rate stressed, to the findings of the Warren Commission: Every other day, that development is shot down, or at least vigorously undermined, by experts associated with the Warren Commission.

The bullet entered the President's body at spot X and so could not have emerged at spot Y and gone on to travel thru Governor Connally's body?

Oh but it didn't enter at spot X — one of the autopsists comes forward — it entered at spot Z.

The original FBI report contradicts the Warren Report?

Yes — but the Warren Report was the result of a more careful survey, and such things do as a matter of fact happen.

The President could not have been shot before frame 210 of the Zapruder film?

Oh but in fact he might very well have been shot at Zapruder 185, because at that moment there was an opening in the foliage that subsequently, until Z 210, stood between Oswald and Mr. Kennedy.

Well but the President didn't make any convulsive movement until 210, suggesting that he was not struck until then. Oh but in fact human beings are known to delay a second, or a second and a half, before registering the shock of a bullet.

And so it goes, on and on and on.

What does it all mean, beyond the sleuthful absorption of a society of riddle-fanciers? It can mean, and probably does, that the Warren Commission didn't do the very best conceivable job — not so much by not coming up with the correct solutions, as by leaving itself exposed to the nit-pickers, and by demonstrating here and there a kind of enthusiasm for its adopted hypotheses, which are not an exact transcript of the supporting documentation.

Surely the Warren Report, rather than say Mark Lane, should have highlighted and carefully given the reasons for the hastiness and subtle inaccuracies of the original FBI report. All right, so the next time a President is assassinated the investigating commission should take into account the experiences of its predecessor. Next?

By William Buckley Jr.

Commerce. There are people around who are making a very good thing out of the affair. No doubt many of them are quite sincere. No doubt a sincerity which is also profitable is a conjunction that is the cause of joy abounding. Life Magazine chooses the anniversary of Mr. Kennedy's death to blow the thing up all over again. Any excuse to use those morbid, exciting, ghoulish pictures which bring in, and continue to bring in, the paying customers, as Madame Tussaud long ago taught us.

And, finally, politics. It has actually been spoken, by men either mad or malevolent, and no doubt in many cases both, that the assassination was arranged by President Johnson. Those who say such things are in a class with Oswald — killers; tho less daring than Oswald, who no doubt anticipated his own punishment. There are more subtle formulations, of which one is that "Lyndon Johnson is as guilty of the murder of Oswald as Henry II was of the murder of Thomas a Becket" — which is bad history and bad morals.

But . . . if somehow President Johnson could be implicated — not that he arranged the thing, or even that he was an accomplice — but that he suppressed the investigation, or something — and here it pays to be very very vague — that could weaken the prestige of President Johnson, and that would benefit quite a few people specifically; and, depending on whether you are a Johnson fancier, maybe all the people . . .

One cannot readily imagine that if Oswald was the agent of a conspiracy directed by the Soviet Union, his spiritual home, you'd have such types as Mark Lane, Buchanan, et al, huffing and puffing for more palatable solutions. And then what if there was no conspiracy of international consequence, but there was a second Oswald who got away (and there is not a scintilla of evidence of any kind that identifies a second killer)? Why by all means let's find him, if we can — which we probably can't, because there are no leads — and punish him. But the finding of him is hardly worth the total commitment of the body and soul of America. Such an effort would be worth it if it would bring the dead man back to life. Otherwise, it deserves only routine attention.

In the decades to come there will be as many neurotics and romancers stepping forward to confess that they were Oswald's accomplice, as have come forward claiming to be Anastasia. And Mark Lane III will be bringing out a new book defending — or opposing — the claims of the incumbent Pretender. A gloomy prospect.